

British Dyslexia Association

Employer: Reasonable Adjustments

Written Communication

General difficulty with reading:

- Give verbal as well as written instructions.
- Highlight salient points in documents.
- Use voice mail as opposed to written memos.
- Use screen reading software.
- Supply screen reading software and scanner.
- A Reading Pen may be useful for unfamiliar words.
- Provide information on coloured paper (find out which colour helps the person to read best).
- Set up a computer screen with a coloured background to documents.

Difficulty with reading and writing:

- Allow plenty of time to read and complete the task.
- Examine other ways of giving the same information to avoid reading.
- Discuss the material with the employee, giving summaries and/or key points.
- Utilise information prepared in other formats for example audio or videotape, drawings, diagrams and flowcharts.
- Use mind-mapping software, such as Inspiration, Mind Genius.
- Use digital recorders.
- Use speech to text software.
- Get someone else to take the Minutes of meetings.

Spelling and grammar errors:

- Offer assistive text software such as ClaroRead or TextHelp.
- Proof read work.
- Instant spell checker on all computers.
- Offer assistive text software on all applications, where possible.

Working at a computer:

- Change background colour of screen to suit individual preference.
- Supply anti-glare screen filter.
- Allow frequent breaks, at least every hour.
- Alternate computer work with other tasks where possible.
- Avoid continuous all day computer work.

Verbal Communication.

Difficulty remembering and following verbal instructions:

- Give instructions one at a time.
- Communicate instructions slowly and clearly in a quiet location.
- Write down important information.
- Demonstrate and supervise tasks and projects.
- Encourage the person to take notes and then check them.
- Ask instructions to be repeated back, to confirm that the instruction has been understood correctly.
- Write a memo outlining a plan of action.
- Use a digital recorder to record important instructions.
- Back up multiple instructions in writing or with diagrams.
- Difficulty with hidden meanings in conversation.
- Give clear concise and direct instructions; do not hint or make assumptions that you have been understood.

Time and Work Planning

Concentration difficulties/distractions:

- Make sure the workplace is quiet and away from distractions for example away from doors, busy phones, loud machinery.
- Allocate a private workspace if possible.
- Where feasible allow an employee to work from home occasionally.
- Provide a quiet working environment for a dyslexic employee by allocating libraries, file rooms, private offices and other enclosed areas when others are not using them.

Coping with interruptions:

- Use a “do not disturb” sign when specific tasks require intense concentration.
- Encourage co-workers not to disturb the person unless absolutely necessary.
- When interrupting, allow the person to pause and write down what they are doing to refer to when resuming work.
- Ensure that each task is completed before starting another.
- Encourage outgoing rather than incoming calls. Offer training in how to use the telephone effectively for example jotting down key points before making the call.

Remembering appointments and deadlines:

- Remind the person of important deadlines and review priorities regularly.
- Hang a wall planner that visually highlights daily/monthly appointments, deadlines, tasks and projects.
- Supply a PDA personal digital organiser.
- Supply an alarm watch.
- Encourage the employee to use the daily calendar and alarm features on his/her computer.

Organisation of property:

- Ensure that work areas are organised, neat and tidy.
- Keep items where they can be clearly seen for example shelves and bulletin boards.
- Ensure the team returns important items to the same place each time.
- Colour code items.
- Ensure work areas are well lit.

Organising workflow:

- Supply and use a wall planner.
- Prioritise important tasks.
- Create a daily, dated "To Do" list.
- Use diaries.
- Write a layout for regular tasks with appropriate prompts for example for meetings or taking notes.
- Allow extra time for unforeseen occurrences.
- Build planning time into each day.

General difficulties:

Reversing numbers:

- Encourage the person to say the numbers out loud, write them down or press the calculator keys and check the figures have been understood.
- Supply a talking calculator or use the calculator function on TextHelp software.

Directional difficulties:

Always try to use the same route.

- Show the route and visible landmarks.
- Give time to practise going from one place to another.
- Supply detailed maps.
- Supply GPS car navigation system.

Short term memory problems especially names, numbers and lists:

- Use mnemonic devices and acronyms.
- Organise details on paper so that they can be referred to easily using diagrams and flowcharts.
- Check back understanding.
- Use multi-sensory learning techniques such as reading material onto a tape machine and then playing it back whilst re-reading.
- Use computer software; sometimes well developed program menus and help features are useful.
- Use a calculator.

The following have proved successful for many. However, specialist advice is essential to determine the most appropriate adjustments for a particular individual.

It is important to determine:

1. The nature of the individual's dyslexia; this should be obtained from their diagnostic assessment.
2. The requirements of the job and its related task and competence requirements.
3. The working environment and working practices and any impact on performance.
4. The requirements of any associated training and assessment.

This process enables those involved to identify job and training requirements that are likely to be the most successful in mitigating any areas of difficulty.

Implementing Reasonable Adjustments will not be an overnight remedy. Depending on the nature of the dyslexia and the job specification, it may take a few months before a review of performance may be undertaken.

For information on assistive software to support dyslexia in the workplace see the [BDA Technologies website](#)